Islam 101

The First Edition

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Surat Al-Fatihah

In the Name of Allah — the Most Compassionate, Most Merciful (1)
All praise is for Allah — Lord of all worlds (2)
the Most Compassionate, Most Merciful (3)
Master of the Day of Judgment (4)
You alone we worship and You alone we ask for help (5)
Guide us along the Straight Path (6)
the Path of those You have blessed — not those You are displeased with, or those who are astray (7)

Bismillah hir rahman nir raheem (1)
Alhamdu lillaahi Rabbil ‘aalameen (2)
Ar-Rahmaanir-Raheem (3)
Maaliki Yawmid-Deen (4)
Iyyaaka na’budu wa Iyyaaka nasta’een (5)
Ihdinas-Siraatal-Mustaqeem (6)
Siraatal-lazeena an’amta ‘alaihim ghayril-maghdoobi ‘alaihim wa lad-daaalleen (7)

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Contents - Part 1

Basic Islamic Beliefs

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What is Quran?

The Quran is the word of Allah (God) Almighty revealed to his Messenger Muhammad (peace be upon him) through the angel Gabriel (peace be upon him).

The Quran is divided into *surahs* (chapters). There are 114 *surahs* in the Quran. Each *surah* is divided into *ayahs* (verses).

The first chapter of the Quran *is surat Al-Fatihah* (see page 4 for its translation and transliteration) which literally means "that which opens a subject or a book or any other thing".

Surat Al-Fatihah must be recited in every prayer, hence it is recited at least 5 times a day. The majority of Islamic scholars believe that *Surat Al-Fatihah* was revealed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) while he lived in Makkah.

Before reading the Quran, Muslims are instructed to seek refuge in Allah Almighty from the Devil by saying:

"I seek refuge in Allah against the accursed *Shaytan* (Satan)."

Who is Allah Almighty?

Allah Almighty has revealed to us, through the *hadith* and Quran, 99 names by which He describes Himself. He also describes Himself to us through the verses of the *Quran*, as in *Ayat Al-Kursi* which follows:

> Allah! There is no god worthy of worship except Him, the Ever-Living, All-Sustaining. Neither drowsiness nor sleep overtakes Him. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who could possibly intercede with Him without His permission? He fully knows what is ahead of them and what is behind them, but no one can grasp any of His knowledge—except what He wills to reveal. His Seat encompasses the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of both does not tire Him. For He is the Most High, the Greatest.
>
> -Quran 2:255

Ayat Al-Kursi is the greatest verse in the whole Quran.

In the following *ayahs* from *surah Ash-Shu'ara*, Prophet Ibraheem (peace be upon him) describes Allah Almighty's Lordship, i.e., the fact that Allah Almighty is the Lord, Sovereign, Creator and Provider of all things, that He is the Giver of life and death, the One Who brings benefit and causes harm, the only One Who answers prayers, the One Who is in control of all things, in Whose Hand is all goodness, and the One Who is able to do whatever He wills.

He is the One Who created me, and He alone guides me (78) He is the One Who provides me with food and drink (79) And He alone heals me when I am sick (80) And He is the One Who will cause me to die, and then bring me back to life (81) And He is the One Who, I hope, will forgive my flaws on Judgment Day (82)

-Quran 26:78-82

What is *Tawheed* (Monotheism)?

Tawheed is the fundamental belief in the Oneness of Allah. It has three core components: belief in the Oneness of Allah's Lordship (He alone is the Creator and Sustainer), belief in His exclusive right to be worshipped (no one else deserves worship), and belief in His unique names and attributes (none of His qualities can be compared to others). The association of anyone or anything with Allah in these core components directly contradicts with *tawheed*.

Chapter 112 of the Quran, surat Al-Ikhlas, emphasizes the concept of *tawheed*:

Say, O Prophet, “He is Allah—One and
Indivisible (1)
Allah—the Sustainer needed by all (2)
He has never had offspring, nor was He born (3)
And there is none comparable to Him” (4)

–Quran 112:1-4

The following *hadith* shows how central *tawheed* is to Islamic belief by virtue of the status given to *surat Al-Ikhlas*:

Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said to his Companions, "Is anyone of you incapable of reciting one-third of the Quran in one night?" They considered it burdensome and said: "O Messenger of Allah, which of us can afford to do that?" He (peace be upon him) said, "*Surat Al-Ikhlas* [Say: He is Allah (the) One] is equivalent to one-third of the Quran."

Who is Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)?

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the last of the many Messengers sent to humanity over the course of history to convey the message that Allah Almighty is the one and only God and to worship Him alone without associating other things/beings with him in worship.

A common misconception among non-Muslims is that Muslims worship the Prophet (peace be upon him). Muslims do not worship the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). They worship Allah and Allah alone.

Muhammad is no more than a messenger; other messengers have gone before him. If he were to die or to be killed, would you regress into disbelief? Those who do so will not harm Allah whatsoever. And Allah will reward those who are grateful

-Quran 2:144

What is Judgement Day?

The Day of Judgement is the day when every soul is resurrected from their grave and taken to account for every single good and bad deed they did while they were alive in this worldly life. By God's will, those whose good deeds outweigh their bad ones are admitted to Eternal Paradise, while those whose bad deeds outweigh their good ones are thrown into Eternal Hell.

There is no doubt that Allah is the Most Knowledgeable and Most Just, and He knows what each of us will be held accountable for on Judgement Day. The Almighty is also the Most Merciful, Most Gracious, and Most Generous, and so believers hope that He will have mercy on them and save them from His punishment on that day.

And We place the scales of justice for the Day of Resurrection, so no soul will be treated unjustly at all. And if there is [even] the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it forth. And sufficient are We as accountant.

-Quran 21:47

Although there are certain signs which indicate the approaching of the Day of Judgement, exactly when it will occur is known only by Allah Almighty. We therefore must be prepared for it at all times by always striving to do good and seek forgiveness from Allah for our sins.

What is *Sunnah*?

Sunnah refers to the practices, sayings, and actions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), serving as a practical guide to implementing Quranic teachings. It is a key part of Islam as it clarifies Quranic verses and provides comprehensive guidance on personal and social conduct.

The *sunnah* is derived from two main sources: *Hadith* and *Ijma* (the scholarly consensus on certain matters).

What is *Hadith*?

A *hadith* is an account of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) saying, doing, or approving/disapproving of something (either verbally or through his actions). The following *hadith* tells the story of how the Prophet (peace be upon him) received his first revelation from Allah Almighty through the messenger angel *Jibreel* (Gabriel).

> Narrated 'Aisha (the mother of the faithful believers): The commencement of the Divine Inspiration to Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) was in the form of good dreams which came true like bright daylight, and then the love of seclusion was bestowed upon him. He used to go into seclusion in the cave of Hira where he used to worship (Allah alone) continuously for many days before his desire to see his family. He used to take with him the journey food for the stay and then come back to (his wife) Khadija to take his food likewise again till suddenly the Truth descended upon him while he was in the cave of Hira.

The angel came to him and asked him to read. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied, "I do not know how to read." The Prophet (peace be upon him) added, "The angel caught me (forcefully) and pressed me so hard that I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read and I replied, 'I do not know how to read.' Thereupon he caught me again and pressed me a second time till I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read but again I replied, 'I do not know how to read (or what shall I read)?' Thereupon he caught me for the third time and pressed me, and then released me and said, 'Read in the name of your Lord, who has created (all that exists), created man from a clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous." Then Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) returned with the Inspiration and with his heart beating severely. Then he went to Khadija bint Khuwailid and said, "Cover me! Cover me!" They covered him till his fear was over and after that he told her everything that had happened and said, "I fear that something may happen to me." Khadija replied, "Never! By Allah, Allah will never disgrace you. You keep good relations with your kith and kin, help the poor and the

destitute, serve your guests generously and assist the deserving calamity-afflicted ones." Khadija then accompanied him to her cousin Waraqa bin Naufal bin Asad bin 'Abdul 'Uzza, who, during the pre-Islamic Period became a Christian and used to write in Hebrew. He would write from the Gospel in Hebrew as much as Allah wished him to write. He was an old man and had lost his eyesight. Khadija said to Waraqa, "Listen to the story of your nephew, O my cousin!" Waraqa asked, "O my nephew! What have you seen?" Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) described whatever he had seen. Waraqa said, "This is the same one who keeps the secrets (angel Gabriel) whom Allah had sent to Moses. I wish I were young and could live up to the time when your people would turn you out." Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) asked, "Will they drive me out?" Waraqa replied in the affirmative and said, "Anyone (man) who came with something similar to what you have brought was treated with hostility; and if I should remain alive till the day when you will be turned out then I would support you strongly." But after a few days Waraqa died and the Divine Inspiration was also paused for a while.

Contents - Part 2

Dua'a and *Dhikr*

- What is *Dua'a?*
- What is *Dhikr?*
- What is *Istighfar?*
- The Abrahamic Prayer

What is *Dua'a*?

Dua'a is a core act of worship in Islam, where Muslims call upon Allah Almighty for any need, whether big or small. It can be done in any situation and for anything as long as it is something *halal* (permissible). For example, one may make *dua'a* for money, health, forgiveness, heaven, marriage, children, etc.

The following is an example of a *dua'a* (followed by its Arabic to English transliteration) for those who are sad, captive to anxiety and distress, or burdened by struggles in their lives:

> O Allah, Reliever of distress, Remover of sorrow, Dispeller of sadness! O Allah, remove from us our distress and sorrow, and remove from us our sadness.
>
> *Allahumma faarij al-hamm, kaashif al-ghamm, mudhhib al-huzn, ikshif Allahumma 'annaa hammanaa wa ghammanaa, wa adhhib 'annaa huznanaa.*

The following is a *dua'a* from Quran and Sunnah asking Allah Almighty for good in both this World and the Hereafter (followed by its Arabic to English transliteration):

Our Lord, grant us the good things in this world, and the good things in the next life, and save us from the punishment of the Fire.

Rabbanaa aatina fi'd-dunyaa hasanah, wa fi'l-aakhirati hasanah, wa qinaa 'adhaaba an-naar.

On page 4, we introduced Surat Al-Fatihah. Surat Al-Fatihah is technically a *dua'a* for guidance. When recited in prayer it is followed by pronouncing *Ameen* (Amen).

The following hadith shows the value of the supplication of the most vulnerable members of the Muslim nation for the entire nation:

> Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas reported: The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Verily, Allah only supports this nation due to the supplications, the prayers, and the sincerity of their vulnerable."

This is particularly relevant nowadays where the Muslim nation is in dire need of the supplication of its vulnerable. As Muslims, it is imperative that we make dua'a for the oppressed Muslims like we would for ourselves

What is *Dhikr*?

Reliance on Allah for help, support, and strength in every aspect of life is achieved through continual remembrance and frequent invocation, i.e., *Dhikr* and *Dua'a*. *Dhikr*, meaning remembrance, involves praising and glorifying Allah both inwardly in the heart and outwardly with the tongue.

The following are some examples of *dhikr* that that can be recited anytime and anywhere (along with the Arabic to English transliteration):

There is no god but Allah.

Laa ilaaha illa Allah.

Allah is free from imperfection. All praise be to Allah. Allah is the Greatest.

Subhaana llaah, Alhamdu lillaah, Allaahu Akbar.

There is no power (in averting evil) or strength
(in attaining good) except through Allah.

Laa hawla wa laa quwwata illaa billaah.

There is no god worthy of worship except You;
You are free from all imperfection. Indeed, I
have been of the wrongdoers.

*Laa ilaaha illaa Anta, Subhaanaka inni kuntu
mina-zzaalimeen.*

O The Ever Living, The One Who sustains and
protects all that exists; I seek assistance
through Your Mercy.

*Yaa Hayyu Yaa Qayyoom, birahmatika
astagheeth.*

What is *Istighfar*?

Istighfar literally means to seek forgiveness from Allah Almighty. It is a recognition of one's sins and a call for Allah's Mercy. *Istighfar* is a form of *dhikr* and may be recited at any time, including after prayers and during moments of reflection.

It is an important form of worship in Islam where a person asks Allah Almighty for forgiveness for their sins and errors. It purifies the heart, invites Allah's mercy, and serves as a shield against the influence of *Shaytan*.

Whoever commits evil or wrongs themselves
then seeks Allah's forgiveness will certainly
find Allah All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

-Quran 4:10

The Abrahamic Prayer

The Abrahamic prayer is a form of *dhikr*. It is basically a prayer to Allah Almighty asking Allah Almighty to praise and exalt the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

The following is the translation of the Abrahamic prayer (followed by the Arabic to English transliteration):

O Allah send prayers[1] upon Muhammad and the followers of Muhammad just as You sent prayers upon Ibraheem and upon the followers of Ibraheem. Verily You are full of praise and majesty. O Allah send blessings upon Mohammad and upon the followers of Muhammad just as You sent blessings upon Ibraheem and upon the followers of Ibraheem. Verily You are full of praise and majesty.

1. send prayers: praise and exalt him in the highest and superior of gatherings: that of the closest angels to Allah.

Allahumma salli ‘ala Muhammad, wa ‘ala aali Muhammad, kama sallayta ‘ala Ibraheem, wa ‘ala aali Ibraheem, innaka Hameedun Majeed.

Allahumma barik ‘ala Muhammad, wa ‘ala aali Muhammad, kama barakta ‘ala Ibraheem, wa ‘ala aali Ibraheem, innaka Hameedun Majeed.

It is sunnah to send prayers and blessings to the Prophet (peace be upon him) on the blessed day of Friday. This shows the high honor the Prophet (peace be upon him) is given by Allah Almighty.